

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 355 190

SP 034 271

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TITLE The Pan African Studies Institute: Teaching the Teachers.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the African American Education Conference (Cincinnati, OH, November 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acculturation; *Black Students; Classroom Techniques; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Institutes (Training Programs); Preservice Teacher Education; *Racial Attitudes; Social Integration; *Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS African Americans; Afrocentrism; *Curriculum Implementation; Knowledge Base for Teaching; *Pan African Movement; University of Louisville KY

ABSTRACT

The Pan African Studies Institute for Teachers is a year-long, 9-credit hour sequence of college courses and related follow-up activities designed to prepare educators for the implementation of an anti-racist, Afrocentric curriculum. This paper outlines a conceptual and historical framework within which the institute may be understood and assesses current research and historical literature on several broad educational and social issues not related directly to school curriculum. The institute provides intensive and structured learning experiences intended to equip educators with the knowledge base, and with instructional and classroom management strategies considered to be most effective in facilitating the educational and social development of African American children; it reflects the direct and informed involvement of African American educators and academicians in an effort to define curriculum content and values for all students; it establishes criteria for training and retraining teachers; and it develops educationally and philosophically valid quality controls which may be applied to both teacher training and curriculum implementation. The paper describes the organization and programs of the institute. (Contains 45 selected references.) (LL)

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The Pan African Studies Institute:
Teaching the Teachers

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Running Head: THE PAS INSTITUTE

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Abstract

The Pan African Studies Institute for Teachers is a year-long, nine (9) credit hour sequence of college courses and related follow-up activities designed to prepare educators for the implementation of an anti-racist, Afrocentric curriculum. The PAS Institute provides intensive and structured learning experiences intended to equip educators with the knowledge base, instructional and classroom management strategies most effective in facilitating the educational and social development of African American children. This article outlines the conceptual and historical framework of the Institute--and concludes by describing the organization and programs of the Institute itself.

The Pan African Studies Institute:

Teaching the Teachers

As a major social institution, education can serve either to intensify, maintain, lessen, or eliminate racism, racial antagonism and racial inequality in American society (Hacker, 1992; Kozol, 1991; McCarthy, 1990; Spring, 1976). Although racism and racial inequality have been maintained over time by the complex interaction of more fundamental and more powerful political, economic and socio-cultural institutions, the role of schools in acculturating/ socializing children and young adults--along with their role as a link to and between these other institutions--have made education central to any efforts to achieve racial equality and racial justice (Wilson, 1992; Nasaw, 1979; Ogbu, 1978; Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

The Pan African Studies Institute for Teachers is designed to prepare teachers and prospective teachers for the implementation of a curriculum which combats racism and conveys accurate knowledge of African and African American studies. However, before describing the Institute and its programs, it is necessary to define a conceptual framework within which the Institute may be understood--and for the derivation of this framework, it is necessary to review and assess the current research and historical literature on several broad educational and social issues not related directly to school curriculum. While these issues cannot be explored in depth, their introduction is intended to locate

the issue of teacher preparation for an anti-racist, Afrocentric curriculum reform in a coherent context.

Issues in African American Education

It is essential, first, to understand clearly what educational institutions are and are not, and what they can and cannot do with respect to producing a new social order as it relates to race (and, in theory, to gender and socio-economic class as well). For example, if racially discriminatory employment patterns cause disproportionate unemployment, underemployment and lack of upward occupational mobility for African Americans, improving the "qualifications" of African Americans through more effective schools and colleges will not necessarily alter these patterns--which require a direct challenge to the economic order and the law (Hacker, 1992). In this context, only racial problems rooted in the operations and effects of educational institutions can properly be conceived as "educational problems" with educational solutions.

Unfortunately, American social policy for the past generation has been fraught with confusion, intended or otherwise, on this point--particularly as an extension of elaborate theories that rationalized the implementation of unworkable educational solutions to economic or political inequality. By failing to define either problems or solutions with adequate clarity and precision, inequalities of wealth and power remained largely untouched, as did

educational problems amenable to educational solutions (McCarthy, 1990; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Weinberg, 1983).

Modern educational theory also suffers from the lack of a coherent conceptual framework which addresses curriculum theory, educational sociology, and the cultural/historical realities of the United States in a comprehensive and logically consistent manner--and from which a logically and philosophically consistent set of programs can be derived. For example, it is not uncommon for programs based on radically different assumptions regarding "human nature", the educability of children, learning theory, and the goals of education to exist within the same school or school district (McCarthy, 1990).

Furthermore, educational sociology tends to anchor its theories outside the stream of history--particularly African American history and particularly when sociological theories cannot be accommodated neatly to historical phenomena and patterns (Berlowitz & Edari, 1984). For this reason, neither the origins nor the manifestations nor the persistence of racism have been explained convincingly or credibly by modern sociological theorists--who were often forgiven for this failing due to their broad support of civil rights reforms and racial equality. Equally damaging, curriculum theory often ignores the role of race, racial/cultural differences as well as the role of educational institutions in maintaining racial inequality--

imposing a "code of silence" which leaves students, uninformed educators and interested observers with the impression that these issues are peripheral or irrelevant (McCarthy, 1990; Tomlinson, 1990).

This confusion notwithstanding, two legitimate educational issues emerge from the research literature as being of paramount importance to African Americans: curriculum, and the qualitative and quantitative equalization of educational outcomes (Asante, 1990; Smith & Chunn, 1989; Weinberg, 1977). Curriculum encompasses what is taught in school, formally and informally, and what is valued, i.e., the content materials and symbols selected for inclusion and use in the classroom, how this content is taught, i.e., instructional methodology, and the social context of instruction itself. On the other hand, educational outcomes refer to the extent to which all students, at all levels, acquire and are able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to function successfully in the social order of the present and future--along with benefitting equally from their affective school experiences, e.g., personality development, self-concept and self-esteem (Gill, 1991).

These issues have often been described as matters bearing exclusively on the classroom behavior of teachers. However, while the role of the teacher in the classroom is crucial, the schools themselves are social organizations

whose policies, practices and organizational cultures are derived from and reflect the values of the larger society (Gundara, et al., 1986; Nasaw, 1979; Rist, 1970; Parsons, 1959). In other words, school systems or boards of education or state departments of education--as extensions of their constituencies--determine, on a policy level, the curriculum standards and expectations related to outcomes with which and within which teachers must work. These standards are not simply revelations of eternal and immutable truths, but reflect the deliberate decisions of often biased and self-interested groups. Thus, what is taught and how, and whether or not equal educational outcomes are achieved by all racial groups have as much, if not more, to do with the purposes of schools as social institutions as with the roles of teachers as educators.

The conceptualization of these curriculum and outcome issues has varied dramatically through African American history--often depending on the impact of corollary issues such as access, segregation versus non-segregation, testing and standards, and control (Hilliard, 1991; Anderson, 1988; Weinberg, 1977; DuBois, 1973; Woodson, 1919). For example, curriculum theory and practice have been based on prevailing views regarding the educability of African Americans and their "place" in the social order--the classic illustration being the relationship between industrial education and the political accommodationism of Booker T. Washington

(Anderson, 1988; Woodson, 1933). Similarly, a commitment to equal educational outcomes by race has represented, historically, at least a partial commitment to racial equality, while the maintenance and acceptance of institutional arrangements which produced consistently unequal outcomes has represented a commitment to the maintenance and acceptance of racial subordination and inequality (McCarthy, 1978; Weinberg, 1977).

Until the mid-twentieth century, assimilation was the professed goal of African American education--regardless of the curriculum and other educational practices employed to achieve it (McCarthy, 1990; Weinberg, 1983; DuBois, 1973; Woodson, 1919). The assimilationist educational model postulated that African Americans should be taught to accept and adopt the values, world-view and behaviors of white, middle-class American society. A decidedly Eurocentric (actually, Anglocentric, since even European history in this nation is taught from a "British" perspective) curriculum, whether outcomes were intended to be equal or unequal, was the "conditioning" process by which assimilation was to be achieved (Asante, 1990; Asante, 1988; Karenga, 1982).

In the past generation, the assimilationist model has been rejected--on philosophical and experiential grounds--by increasing numbers of African Americans, and has been questioned by many educators, politicians and even corporate executives threatened by the implications of the current

demographic projections for the next century (McCarthy, 1990; Weinberg, 1983; Karenga, 1982; Jenkins and Shipman, 1976; Ford, 1973; Walton, 1969). Alternatives to the assimilationist model may be grouped, based on their orientation and emphasis, under the following categories:

- 1) multicultural education - encompasses a variety of programs and curriculum models, ranging from those which strive simply to foster "cross-cultural understanding", i.e., a human relations approach designed to heighten sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, racial or gender differences; "cross-cultural competence", i.e., bilingual and multicultural curricula designed to expose teachers and students, in-depth, to languages and cultures outside their own; and "cultural emancipation", i.e., based on the premise that the inclusion of material reflecting African American and other non-white cultures in the school curriculum can improve the self-esteem of non-white students and improve their life chances outside the school setting (Gill, 1991; Gollnick & Chinn, 1990; McCarthy, 1990; Grant and Skeeter, 1989; Lynch, 1981).
- 2) Afrocentric education - as the term denotes, Africa and the history, culture and experiences of persons of African descent are taken as central, rather than peripheral, to the curriculum. Afrocentric education

has some of the attributes of the "vindicationist" school of thought--which sought to counter the often blatant inaccuracies of common Eurocentric treatments of Africa and persons of African descent. This approach also emphasizes the primary need for African American students to learn about themselves and the significant contributions of their ancestors as a means of developing positive self-esteem, a sense of social responsibility to the African American community, and a strong achievement orientation (Gill, 1991; Asante, 1990; Asante, 1988; Karenga, 1982). Also, in theory, the Afrocentric model is one variation of several possible ethnocentric models.

- 3) Social reconstructionist education - rather than emphasizing the acceptance and celebration of cultural differences, or focusing exclusively on the culture and contributions of African Americans (or another non-white group), this curriculum model concentrates on the role of race itself in American, Western and/or world culture and history. The anti-racist curriculum (often closely allied with anti-sexist and anti-classist models) is designed to confront and eliminate racism and racial inequality in the schools--and, by extension, in the larger society (Gundara, 1986; Berlowitz & Edari, 1982; Pedersen, et al., 1978).

At one extreme, the "cultural understanding" variation of multicultural education has been widely criticized by African Americans and others as a means of shifting attention from legitimate and long-standing African American educational concerns by sponsoring superficial "celebrations of diversity" without addressing racism and racial inequality, or substantive African and African American curriculum content (McCarthy, 1990; Gundara, 1986). At the other extreme, Afrocentric education and ethnic studies in general have been challenged by neo-conservative critics for concentrating solely on one racial group and, by those who uphold the value of the traditional Eurocentric/Anglocentric curriculum, for their alleged "therapeutic" emphasis and "exaggerations" of fact (Bloom, 1987). The extent to which the Afrocentric approach addresses, directly, the issues of equalizing educational outcomes and improving intergroup dynamics is subject to considerable variation as well.

Typically, multicultural, Afrocentric and social reconstructionist curricula have been proposed for and offered in schools and/or school districts with a substantial representation of non-white students--and often only for non-white students (Tomlinson, 1990; Gundara, 1986). However, if only the victims of racism are to be taught the evils of racism and cultural myopia, there is no mechanism by which to affect the attitudes and behaviors of those who maintain and benefit from racial inequality.

Thus, while focusing on African American students is consistent with a purely Afrocentric model, it is a significant limitation with respect to the education of white students and especially with respect to achieving the professed aims of multicultural and social reconstructionist education. Furthermore, such curriculum reforms in school districts with large non-white student populations have often served as effective means of placating angry non-white communities--while not changing the basic school curriculum, or the social organization of the schools, or addressing outcome inequalities in any significant way (Gundara, 1986).

These models are not, in all cases, mutually exclusive and, given the relative limitations of each, several combinations are possible depending on the political and economic purposes to be served. Based on this critical overview of the theoretical and research literature, the most promising fusion of curriculum models combines the best features of the "cultural competence" and "cultural emancipation" variants of the multicultural education model with an Afrocentric emphasis--to ensure that the racial group with the longest history of inequality received priority. This fusion would be fixed, securely, within the framework of a social reconstructionist and anti-racist curriculum, and would be offered, ideally, to all students--regardless of the demographics of the school district in question.

Having established these broad policy and theoretical parameters, two crucial conditions must be met before this curriculum model can be implemented effectively:

- 1) To prepare students to live in a pluralistic society, both the culture and organization of the schools must be pluralistic as well (Appleton, 1983; Apple, 1979). This type of change is systemic and fundamental.
- 2) Teachers cannot teach what they do not know. Teacher training and teacher in-service programs must educate and/or re-educate teachers, enabling them to create, maintain, and function effectively in this new educational environment (Banks, 1987; Baker, 1973).

While responsibility for curriculum design can be entrusted to specialists and other consultants, the successful implementation of this type of curriculum reform--or reforms less far-reaching in nature--depends, once policy-level commitments have been made, on thousands of classroom teachers themselves. However, teacher preparation programs in American colleges and universities seldom include even elective courses on African and/or African-American studies (Tisher and Wideen, 1990; Holly and McLoughlin, 1989; Peters, 1977). As a consequence, the vast majority of current and prospective teachers have had no formal exposure to the material they will be expected to teach. Moreover, since the academic and methodological expertise required by public school educators exists, and will probably continue to exist for some time, outside the domain of existing

teacher preparation, advanced certification and in-service programs, public school educators have no simple and assured means of acquiring this background.

Paradoxically, the magnitude of this problem has seldom been addressed realistically. The typical approach has been to offer short-term or "one-shot" workshops and in-service programs for teachers--usually with a human relations emphasis. However, acquiring substantive knowledge of African and African American studies is not a short-term undertaking--given the massive and ever-increasing volume of information bearing on these disciplines. Similarly, the teaching and classroom management techniques needed to promote the academic and social development of African American students cannot be mastered in a few hours, but require sustained involvement in new or supplemental learning experiences. Anything less implies that there is little or nothing of value to be learned in these areas and/or that the problems to be solved are so inconsequential as to be amenable to a "quick fix."

To establish and operationalize this necessary "missing link" between anti-racist/Afrocentric curriculum theory and its actual implementation, the Pan African Studies Institute for Teachers was designed specifically to address the education/re-education of educators in preparation for teaching and infusing African and African American studies, understanding the socio- and psychodynamics of racism, and

working effectively with African American children to achieve equal educational outcomes. Moreover, since the curriculum model outlined herein is currently an as yet unrealized ideal, the multiple emphases of the Institute are intended to equip educators to serve African American children in a wide array of less ambitious programs.

Program Design: The Pan African Studies
Institute for Teachers

On April 11, 1990, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky signed House Bill 940, the Kentucky Educational Reform Act (KERA), in response to a Kentucky Supreme Court mandate to restructure the state's common school system. Among its many provisions, KERA required that public school districts modify their curricular offerings to reflect the cultural and historical contributions of all racial/ethnic groups to American society (Miller, et al., 1990).

Since African-American students represent approximately 30 percent of the more than 90,000 students served by the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), the school system--which serves Louisville, Kentucky, and its surrounding area--consistent with KERA, committed itself to the infusion of African and African American studies throughout its curriculum by the 1994-1995 school year. However, translating the intent of KERA and the JCPS infusion

initiative into a viable program presented a set of problems which required innovative solutions.

The PAS Institute was designed to address this problem and is structured to provide teachers with:

- a formal survey of African and African American history and culture; and
- insight into attitudes and educational strategies which impact, positively and negatively, the academic and social/psychological development of African American children;

Given these objectives, the Institute is offered in three phases:

Phase I

An intensive summer experience which combines an introduction to special topics in African and African American studies with a series of workshops addressing teaching methods, classroom management, race and education, cross-cultural conflict resolution strategies, and the history and sociology of African American education. The summer phase of the Institute meets daily for two weeks, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., during July. Students may earn three hours of graduate or undergraduate credit. This phase was offered on an experimental basis in July 1991 and

offered again in July 1992 to inaugurate the first full Institute cycle.

Phase II

An in-depth survey of African history and culture, including an introduction to pertinent bibliographic sources, teaching materials and strategies. This survey covers the period spanning the evolution of humankind through post-colonial Africa, and meets weekly during the Fall semester. Students may earn three hours of graduate or undergraduate credit. This phase was developed during the 1991-92 academic year and first offered in Fall 1992.

Phase III

An in-depth survey of African American history and culture, including an introduction to bibliographic sources, teaching materials and strategies. This survey covers the period from the settlement of British North America through the present, and meets weekly during the Spring semester. Students may earn three hours of graduate or undergraduate credit. This phase was developed during the 1991-92 academic year and will be offered in Spring 1993.

Depending on the availability of funding, nationally recognized consultants are featured in Phase I, e.g., Dr. Geneva Smitherman offered a workshop in Summer 1992.

Moreover, a collection of selected bibliographies has been developed to supplement Phases II and III (Hudson, 1992).

Participants

Initial participants in the Institute included JCPS teachers assigned responsibility for African-American studies infusion, teachers identified as cultural diversity liaisons, and supervisory personnel. Special efforts will be made to ensure balanced representation of elementary, middle and high school teachers--along with guidance, supervisory and administrative staff. Enrollment in the Institute is also open to University of Louisville students pursuing teacher education or other related programs, and is limited to thirty (30) registered participants for each phase--although interested community residents are welcome as informal auditors.

Each cohort of participants is expected to complete the full Institute cycle, i.e., each of the three phases. School system personnel who complete the full cycle, in addition to earning nine (9) hours of graduate credit, will be accorded formal recognition as "Pan-African Studies Specialists I" by JCPS and, it is anticipated, by the Kentucky Department of Education--which will be duly noted in their personnel records. Teachers who achieve this level of content exposure and mastery will be considered qualified to infuse African and African American material.

Completion of nine (9) additional hours of graduate credit in designated PAS and/or Education courses, currently being developed, will be required for recognition as "Pan-African Studies Specialists II" by JCPS and the equivalent of an endorsement to the Kentucky teacher certifications of participants. Only teachers who achieve this level of mastery will be considered qualified (based on the criteria established by the Institute) to teach African American studies in the public schools. This standard is consistent with the number of credit hours required for an endorsement to the certification of a teacher in the Commonwealth of the Kentucky--and, along with the involvement of university level specialists, represents a reasonable set of "quality controls."

Given the scope of the JCPS infusion project, it is anticipated that the Institute will need to be offered to thirty (30) teachers per year for at least five consecutive years, i.e., from 1992-93 through 1996-97. The 150 teachers trained over this period will create a "critical mass" in the JCPS teaching ranks--capable of assuming a leadership role in curriculum development and implementation, and in the training of their fellow teachers.

If the Institute proves effective with JCPS personnel, PAS will explore the feasibility of offering it to selected school districts in other regions of the Commonwealth and in a more abbreviated format.

Faculty and Staff

PAS Institute faculty members are drawn from the University's Department of Pan African Studies and School of Education. The Institute Coordinator holds academic rank in the Department of Pan African Studies and is responsible for the programmatic content of the Institute; awarding grades and credit; serving as liaison to other University departments and the public schools; financial management and oversight of the day-to-day activities of the Institute; program evaluation; and serving as a resource to participants. All Institute faculty share responsibility for instruction in the Summer Phase of the Institute, while the Coordinator is primarily responsible for instruction in the Fall and Spring phases--with the support of other Institute faculty as needed.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

The PAS Institute will be evaluated based on its effectiveness in increasing each participant's knowledge of African and African American studies--and its effectiveness in equipping participants with instructional techniques and classroom management strategies which improve the academic performance and enhance the self-esteem of non-white students. The following measures will be employed:

- 1) Participants will be evaluated, i.e., graded, in each phase of the Institute based on their ability to produce a body of work which demonstrates both the acquisition of African and African American content

and their ability to apply their knowledge in the development of classroom activities, annotated bibliographies, and lesson plans.

- 2) Participants will complete the standard University "Student Evaluation" (of a course and instructor) instrument for each phase of the Institute, the results of which will be subjected to statistical analysis;
- 3) An instrument will be developed by Institute staff and faculty which will allow participants to evaluate Institute, focusing specifically on participants' perceptions and expectations. This instrument will be administered as a pre- and post-test, the results of which will be subjected to statistical analysis.
- 4) Jefferson County Public School administrators involved directly or indirectly with the Institute will evaluate the Institute and its impact in the classrooms of participants. Follow-up observations, surveys and analyses of the classroom experiences of participants--and the impact these educators on students--will also be undertaken.

Data collection and analysis commenced in Summer 1992 and a preliminary report on the first full year of the Institute will be released after Spring 1993.

Conclusion

The PAS Institute offers a cumulative sequence of learning experiences designed to prepare teachers not only to infuse and/or teach anti-racist/Afrocentric material, but to function more effectively in a multiracial school and classroom environment. However, the Pan African Studies Institute for Teachers cannot be considered the solution to the complex systemic problems which maintain racial inequality in contemporary educational institutions. Most important, perhaps, the Institute reflects the direct and informed involvement of African American educators and academicians in the effort to define curriculum content and values for all students, to establish criteria for the training and re-training of teachers, and to develop educationally and philosophically valid "quality controls" which may be applied both to teacher training and curriculum implementation.

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